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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: UNITED NATIONS REGIONAL
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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-eighth year

Letter dated 27 July 1993 from the Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations of the States members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the Joint Communiqué of the Twenty-sixth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, issued at Singapore on 24 July 1993 (see annex).

* A/48/150.

I should be grateful if you could arrange to have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under items 42, 72 (d), 79, 80, 100, 114 and 115 of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nitya PIBULSONGGRAM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Joint Communiqué of the Twenty-sixth Ministerial Meeting of the Association of South-East Asian Nations held at Singapore on 23 and 24 July 1993

1. The Twenty-sixth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting was held at Singapore on 23 and 24 July 1993.

Political and security cooperation

2. The Foreign Ministers reviewed the growing political and security cooperation in South-East Asia and the enhancing of dialogue in the Asia-Pacific region.

3. Recalling the Programme of Action for the Enhancement of ASEAN Cooperation approved at the Fourth ASEAN Summit, the Foreign Ministers agreed to continue intra-ASEAN dialogue on security cooperation involving foreign ministry and defence officials, which was convened as a Special Senior Officials Meeting at Manila in June 1992. In this context, they also commended the efforts of the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS) to explore and develop ideas for promoting and enhancing security cooperation among ASEAN members.

4. The Foreign Ministers agreed that conditions in South-East Asia today approximate those envisaged in the Declaration on the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN). They endorsed the "Programme of Action for ZOPFAN" aimed at maintaining and strengthening these conditions in the new geo-political environment.

5. The Foreign Ministers welcomed the resolution on the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South-East Asia, which was adopted by consensus at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1992 (resolution 47/53 B). The Treaty is significant in that it establishes a code of conduct and provides a mechanism for the peaceful resolution of disputes in the region. They commended the principles in the Treaty as a basis for preventive diplomacy in the region. The Treaty also contributes to community-building in the South-East Asian region.

6. The Foreign Ministers also noted the significant progress made in resolving the outstanding issues relating to the draft Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ). They directed the Senior Officials Working Group on ZOPFAN and SEANWFZ to continue its work.

7. ASEAN has intensified external dialogues in political and security matters by using the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conferences (PMC) process. ASEAN has also built cooperative and consultative ties with States in the Asia-Pacific region. While there are uncertainties and challenges, the present conditions offer opportunities for countries in the region to strengthen and promote political and security cooperation that would be conducive for continued economic growth and development. It is important for ASEAN to work with its dialogue partners

and other regional States to evolve a more predictable and constructive pattern of political and security relationships in the Asia-Pacific. This would foster the habit of open dialogue and encourage patterns of behaviour that reduce the risks to regional security.

8. The Foreign Ministers welcomed the successful outcome of the first meeting of senior officials of the ASEAN PMC, which was held at Singapore from 20 to 21 May 1993. They noted a convergence of views among the participants on the need to find ways to promote consultations on regional political and security issues. They endorsed the proposal of the senior officials to invite the People's Republic of China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Papua New Guinea, the Russian Federation and Viet Nam to meet ASEAN and its dialogue partners at the "ASEAN Regional Forum" to be held at Bangkok next year.

9. The Foreign Ministers reaffirmed ASEAN's commitment to the centrality of the role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. They viewed the Secretary-General's "An Agenda for Peace" proposals as an innovative approach towards strengthening the role of the United Nations in preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building. They welcomed the Workshop series initiated by Thailand on ASEAN-United Nations Cooperation for Peace and Preventive Diplomacy.

International and regional situation

10. The Foreign Ministers had a wide-ranging exchange of views on current international and regional developments. They agreed that countries such as the United States of America, the People's Republic of China, Japan and the Russian Federation can contribute to regional security through the maintenance of stable relationships and the adoption of positive policies towards the region.

11. The Foreign Ministers expressed the preparedness of the ASEAN countries to work together with the international community, multilateral institutions and the major Powers to contribute to the reconstruction of Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam.

12. The Foreign Ministers called for a faster pace of resettlement of Indochinese refugees and asylum-seekers. They also called for the expeditious repatriations of those Vietnamese "screened-out" as non-refugees. In this context, they welcomed Viet Nam's commitment to the "Orderly Repatriation Programme" for Vietnamese boat people and appealed to the international community to finance the programme for Vietnamese boat people. They called upon the resettlement countries to facilitate an early resolution of the problem.

13. The Foreign Ministers reiterated the invitation to all parties directly concerned to subscribe to the principles of the ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea. They noted that the Workshop series on Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea initiated by Indonesia, and the Working Group meetings held within the framework of the Workshop had promoted understanding among the countries concerned of the issues involved and provided ideas for future cooperation.

14. The Foreign Ministers expressed their serious concern over the desperate situation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, an independent and sovereign Member State of the United Nations. They deplored the blatant aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina by Serbian forces supported by the Yugoslav National Army and compounded by the recent attacks by Croat extremist elements. They called on the United Nations Security Council to act decisively to halt the Serbian aggression, reverse it through withdrawals from all territories occupied by the use of force, "ethnic cleansing" or by any other means, and fully restore the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina should also be exempted from the application of United Nations Security Council resolution 713 (1991), imposing an arms embargo against the former Yugoslavia.

15. The Foreign Ministers welcomed Indonesia's assumption of the Chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement since the Tenth Summit Meeting of the Non-Aligned Countries, held at Jakarta in September 1992. They also noted with appreciation the recent meeting held between Indonesia, as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Group of Seven, through Japan as its Chairman, on which occasion the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement conveyed the Movement's aspirations, new orientations and approaches, and specifically invited the developed countries of the North to enter into a constructive dialogue with countries of the South on the basis of mutuality of interests and of benefits and equitably shared responsibility. They were encouraged by the response of the Group of Seven to the invitation of the Non-Aligned Movement to a dialogue and hoped that it would signal and lead to a mutually beneficial pattern of cooperation between the developed and the developing countries in this era of growing interdependence and globalization in the world economy.

Human rights

16. The Foreign Ministers welcomed the international consensus achieved during the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, and reaffirmed ASEAN's commitment to and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as set out in the Vienna Declaration of 25 June 1993. They stressed that human rights are interrelated and indivisible, comprising civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. These rights are of equal importance. They should be addressed in a balanced and integrated manner and protected and promoted with due regard for specific cultural, social, economic and political circumstances. They emphasized that the promotion and protection of human rights should not be politicized.

17. The Foreign Ministers agreed that ASEAN should coordinate a common approach on human rights and actively participate and contribute to the application, promotion and protection of human rights. They noted that the Charter of the United Nations had placed the question of universal observance and promotion of human rights within the context of international cooperation. They stressed that development is an inalienable right and that the use of human rights as a conditionality for economic cooperation and development assistance is detrimental to international cooperation and could undermine an international consensus on human rights. They emphasized that the protection and promotion of human rights in the international community should take cognizance of the principles of respect for national sovereignty, territorial integrity and

non-interference in the internal affairs of States. They were convinced that freedom, progress and national stability are promoted by a balance between the rights of the individual and those of the community, through which many individual rights are realized, as provided for in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

18. The Foreign Ministers reviewed with satisfaction the considerable and continuing progress of ASEAN in freeing its peoples from fear and want, enabling them to live in dignity. They stressed that the violations of basic human rights must be redressed and should not be tolerated under any pretext. They further stressed the importance of strengthening international cooperation on all aspects of human rights and that all Governments should uphold humane standards and respect human dignity. In this regard and in support of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of 25 June 1993, they agreed that ASEAN should also consider the establishment of an appropriate regional mechanism on human rights.

International economic issues

19. The Foreign Ministers stressed the importance of trade and investment liberalization and increased world trade to secure sustained growth in the world economy.

20. In reviewing the development of world trade, the Foreign Ministers expressed deep concern over the slow pace towards achieving agreement under the Uruguay Round. An early and successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round is necessary to revitalize world trade. The Foreign Ministers noted the renewed determination and commitment of the Group of Seven at their recent meeting in Tokyo to resolve the remaining difficult issues and to conclude the Uruguay Round. However, greater efforts have to be made to multilateralize the process of negotiations. This requires strong political commitment by all parties, particularly the major players, in resolving their differences in order to conclude the Uruguay Round with a balanced package by the end of 1993.

21. On international economic trends, the Foreign Ministers noted a global shift towards regionalism in recent years. They stressed the need for regional groupings such as the European Community, North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) to remain open while seeking to expand intra-regional trade. Regional trade groupings would complement the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and contribute towards a faster and significant conclusion of the Uruguay Round.

22. The Foreign Ministers endorsed the need to protect and preserve the environment, while sustaining long-term economic growth. Developed nations and multilateral financial institutions need to implement the commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, by granting new and additional financial resources and transferring environmentally sound technologies to the developing countries. Environmental issues should not become a cover for protectionism that impedes legitimate trade.

23. The Foreign Ministers emphasized that the right to development and economic well-being is a fundamental and inalienable right of all peoples. The emerging global economic order has to provide for more equal economic opportunities for all nations. They called upon industrialized nations and multilateral financial institutions to intensify their efforts in promoting foreign direct investments in developing countries, and to establish a genuinely open multilateral trading environment. They underscored the importance of peace and stability as a pre-condition for the successful implementation of policies for economic development and the eradication of poverty.

ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA)

24. The Foreign Ministers welcomed the launching of the Common Effective Preferential Tariff (CEPT) Scheme for AFTA on 1 January 1993. Operational details of the CEPT Scheme had been finalized; in particular, lists of products with schedules of tariff reduction have been exchanged among all member countries and the process of tariff reduction among member countries has begun. Various other initiatives, such as tariff reforms, have also been undertaken by ASEAN countries to complement and supplement trade liberalization towards attainment of the objectives of AFTA.

25. The Foreign Ministers expressed the common desire to see the smooth and swift implementation of AFTA to promote further economic cooperation within ASEAN and to facilitate investments in ASEAN by third countries. They reaffirmed the importance of implementing the CEPT Scheme within the time-frame agreed at the Fourth ASEAN Summit. The realization of AFTA would greatly strengthen ASEAN's cohesiveness, dynamism and vitality as a regional organization. AFTA, as a GATT-consistent and outward-looking arrangement, would also contribute to the strengthening of the multilateral trading system.

Functional cooperation

26. The Foreign Ministers expressed satisfaction at the progress of ASEAN cooperation in science and technology, environment, culture and information, social development, drugs and narcotics control and civil service matters. Cooperation in these areas has become more sophisticated and taken a truly ASEAN character. Since the founding of ASEAN, functional cooperation has provided a firm foundation and a rallying point for common action towards strengthening ASEAN solidarity and cooperation. Following the decisions of the Fourth ASEAN Summit, ASEAN-developed technologies are being commercialized and transferred; strategies for the implementation of Agenda 21 for environmentally sound and sustainable development are being formulated; the global thrusts and priorities in culture and information are being developed; increased participation of women in development is being promoted; and, the ASEAN Task Force on AIDS has been established and held its first meeting at Jakarta in March 1993.

Restructuring of the ASEAN secretariat

27. The Foreign Ministers welcomed the completion of the process of restructuring of the ASEAN secretariat and expressed confidence in the

secretariat's ability to carry out its expanded mandate as defined by the Fourth ASEAN Summit. The Twenty-sixth ASEAN Standing Committee has taken steps to provide the necessary resources for the secretariat to perform its functions effectively. With the establishment of the ASEAN Cooperation Unit within the secretariat, a new system for formulating and prioritizing projects with a truly ASEAN focus could now be implemented. The ASEAN secretariat has developed the project appraisal guidelines and standard formats to operationalize a more rational and holistic approach to the review of ASEAN projects. The secretariat is now better equipped to execute many of the projects on its own.

Cooperation with dialogue partners and other organizations

28. The relationship of ASEAN with its dialogue partners remains relevant and important and has moved towards a more equitable relationship for mutual benefit. The Foreign Ministers welcomed the establishment of a sectoral dialogue with India and the efforts to intensify the consultative relationship with the People's Republic of China. The increasing interest of other countries and regional organizations to establish linkages with ASEAN was also noted. The Foreign Ministers affirmed that, in developing such linkages, due account should be taken of the capacity and ability of ASEAN to undertake such tasks in order that the relationships are meaningful for both sides. They expressed their appreciation for all the assistance rendered by the dialogue partners, particularly in the implementation of various development projects. In this connection, the restructuring of the ASEAN Fund would contribute to greater self-reliance and a more mature and balanced relationship with the dialogue partners.

East-Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC)

29. Pursuant to the decision of the Fourth ASEAN Summit, the Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their belief that consultations on issues of common concern among East-Asian economies will contribute to expanding cooperation among the region's economies and the promotion of an open and free global system.

30. The Foreign Ministers considered the report of the Joint Consultative Meeting, held at Jakarta from 9 to 10 July 1993, pertaining to "An Appropriate Modality To Complete The Elaboration of the EAEC Concept". In this context, the Foreign Ministers consider that the ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting would be the appropriate body to provide support and direction for the EAEC, taking into account that the prospective members of EAEC are also members of APEC. Pursuant to this, the Foreign Ministers agreed that the EAEC is a caucus within APEC.

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

31. The Foreign Ministers noted the continued evolution of APEC as a consultative framework for sustaining the growth and dynamism of the Asia-Pacific region. They reiterated that ASEAN would continue to play a constructive role in the evolution of the APEC process.